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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE THOUSAND
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 19 November 1992, at 3.40 p.m.

President:	Mr. ERDOS	(Hungary)
Members:	Austria	Mr. HOHENFELLNER
	Belgium	Mr. NOTERDAEME
	Cape Verde	Mr. JESUS
	China	Mr. LI Daoyu
	Ecuador	Mr. AYALA LASSO
	France	Mr. LADSOUS
	India	Mr. GHAREKHAN
	Japan	Mr. HATANO
	Morocco	Mr. SNOUSSI
	Russian Federation	Mr. VORONTSOV
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir David HANNAY
	United States of America	Mr. PERKINS
	Venezuela	Mr. ARRIA
	Zimbabwe	Mr. MUMBENGEGWI

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The meeting was called to order at 4.10 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

THE SITUATION IN LIBERIA

LETTER DATED 28 OCTOBER 1992 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BENIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/24735)

LETTER DATED 18 NOVEMBER 1992 FROM THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF LIBERIA ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/24825)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo in which they request to be invited to participate in the debate on the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Benin, and invite him to take a place at the Council table.

I welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Interim Government of Liberia, and invite him to take a place at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Holo (Benin) and Mr. Matthews (Liberia) took places at the Council table; Mr. Sanon (Burkina Faso), Mr. Essy (Côte d'Ivoire), Mr. Elaraby (Egypt), Mr. Jabang (Gambia), Mr. Dankwa (Ghana), Mr. Kouyate (Guinea), Mr. Peerthum (Mauritius), Mr. Nwachukwu (Nigeria), Mr. Cissé (Senegal), Mr. Koroma (Sierra Leone) and Mr. Natchaba (Togo) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in response to the requests contained in letters dated 28 October 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/24735) and from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia (S/24825).

I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to documents S/24811, S/24812 and S/24815, dated 30 October, 13 November and 17 November 1992, from the Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The first speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Benin, Mr. Theodore Holo, on whom I now call.

Mr. HOLO (Benin) (interpretation from French): I have the honour, Sir, to extend to you the warm congratulations of the delegation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which I have the privilege to lead here, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for November. Your role at the head of this important body of the United Nations system has been welcomed with great respect by all those who see in the country that you represent, Hungary, the crucible of a great civilization and a great culture and a country that has gained the admiration of the entire world by the impressive manner in which it is giving democracy a contemporary dimension.

I should also like to express to Ambassador Jean-Bernard Mérimée of France, who guided the work of the Council last month, our appreciation for the quality of his presidency. I shall not dwell on the excellent relations that bind his country to all the countries that are members of ECOWAS. They are, in a word, exemplary.

(Mr. Holo, Benin)

To you, Mr. President, and all the other members of the Council I should like to express, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Benin, His Excellency Mr. Nicéphore Soglo, Acting Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, our deepest gratitude for having kindly agreed to hold this meeting of the Security Council devoted to the tragedy unfolding in Liberia. Your presence in this Chamber, despite what I know to be your very busy schedules, attests to the determination and willingness of the Security Council to discharge fully the responsibility entrusted to it by Member States under the relevant provisions of the Charter: safeguarding international peace and security.

The Economic Community of West African States welcomes the attention and constant support it has always had from the United Nations in its efforts to restore peace in Liberia. In this regard, we should mention the statements of the Security Council on 22 January 1991 and 7 May 1992 requesting the warring parties to cooperate in a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

In this context, we should also mention the praiseworthy efforts of the Secretary-General to mobilize international humanitarian assistance for the thousands of innocent victims of famine, rape, murder, hostage-taking and other torments of all kinds.

We have great hope that this meeting will lead to firm decisions whose implementation will finally give the Liberian people, after several years of murderous civil war, reason to hope for a better future.

The civil war raging in Liberia dates back to 1989. It is an armed struggle for political power whose protagonists include Mr. Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and the United Liberation Movement of Liberia (ULIMO), inspired by the memory of the former President of Liberia, killed in that war.

(Mr. Holo, Benin)

Since the outbreak of hostilities the Heads of State and Government of the countries members of the Economic Community of West African States have, both individually and within the framework of the Community, taken many initiatives, all aimed at a peaceful settlement of the Liberian conflict. I should like to remind the Council of the major stages.

First, on 6 and 7 May 1990 the Standing Mediation Committee of the Economic Community of West African States met in Banjul, in the Republic of the Gambia, and took important decisions on the establishment of a cease-fire, the creation of an Economic Community Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), charged with monitoring cease-fires in Liberia, the setting up of a transitional Government, the establishment of a special emergency fund for ECOWAS operations and the establishment of an ECOWAS observer group to oversee general elections and presidential elections.

(Mr. Holo, Benin)

Then, on 27 and 28 November 1990 a special conference of Heads of State or Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held at Bamako, Mali; it adopted a peace plan for Liberia and the entire West African subregion.

Finally, the fourth Yamoussoukro meeting, in October 1991, and the Geneva meeting of April 1992 marked a significant evolution in the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States to establish a just and lasting peace in Liberia. Had there been even a start to the implementation of the results of those important meetings, this would have greatly helped to achieve the goals of the high officials of our subregional organization with respect to Liberia.

All the warring factions in Liberia had accepted the proposed modalities for carrying out the peace plan, including the encampment and disarmament of all their armed troops under the supervision of the Economic Community Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and the organization of free, democratic elections under the supervision of foreign observers.

But the provisions of the ECOWAS peace plan, which had raised such hopes for the restoration of peace - lasting peace - and for the end of the great suffering of the Liberian people, were blocked by many obstacles owing to the numerous violations by one of the warring factions: Mr. Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

Despite many appeals for a cease-fire the fighting continued, especially with the appearance of a faction known as the United Liberation Movement of Liberia (ULIMO).

(Mr. Holo, Benin)

At the fifteenth Summit Meeting of the Economic Community of West African States, held at Dakar from 27 to 29 July 1992, the Heads of State or Government reaffirmed once more their commitment to working for compliance with the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement. A one-month deadline was set for the encampment and disarmament operations. It was also agreed that at the end of that time new measures would be devised to make the various factions comply with the decisions should it become clear that they did not intend to implement them.

At that summit Benin was honoured to be appointed Chairman of ECOWAS for one year. Following the fifteenth summit, convinced that peace and security are the only path to the economic integration that is indispensable for our subregion, President Nicéphore Soglo took a series of actions officially to inform the protagonists, including the NPFL and ULIMO, of the decisions of the Dakar summit and to make them understand the need to accept and scrupulously observe the peace plan and the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement.

The current Chairman of ECOWAS subsequently approached the Secretary-General to gain the assistance and support of the Security Council and the international community at large with respect to any measures the Economic Community of West African States might adopt to restore peace to Liberia.

In conformity with the Dakar summit decisions, the first Joint Summit of the Standing Mediation Committee and the Committee of Five, which had been established to resolve the Liberian conflict, was held at Cotonou, Benin, on 20 October 1992.

(Mr. Holo, Benin)

Following that meeting, a new appeal was issued to the warring parties to observe a cease-fire as of midnight on 21 October 1992 throughout the territory of Liberia. To that end, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group was made responsible for supervising compliance with the cease-fire by the parties concerned. A 15-day deadline was established for the complete implementation of the provisions of the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement of 30 October 1991.

A follow-up committee was established, composed of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. This Committee of Nine constitutes the ministerial delegation I have the honour to lead today. It was mandated to evaluate, five days before the expiration of the 15-day deadline, the extent to which the parties had implemented the Cotonou decisions; if the situation was unchanged, the Committee was mandated to implement fully the Cotonou decision with respect to sanctions against the warring factions that had not complied with the provisions of the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement. Those sanctions are intended to blockade all land, sea and air points of entry into Liberia in order to prevent the delivery of war matériel to those parties and the export of products from the zones they control in Liberia.

Despite the measures we adopted at Cotonou in the hope of ending the horrors of a civil war that has already cost thousands of lives, there remains a great risk that the war will spread to the entire West African subregion if the protagonists continue, in violation of international humanitarian law, to speak the language of arms rather than that of dialogue and reason.

(Mr. Holo, Benin)

The ECOWAS intervention force, ECOMOG, is gravely handicapped in its mission, and has even been the target of armed attacks by Mr. Charles Taylor's NPFL that have claimed many victims in its ranks.

Those were the circumstances in which a meeting of Heads of State or Government of the follow-up committee - the Committee of Nine - was held at Abuja on 7 November 1992. The summit issued a fresh appeal for an immediate cease-fire as of midnight, 10 November 1992. The Heads of State or Government also invited the Secretary-General to name a special representative to work with the Economic Community of West African States to implement the peace plan for Liberia.

Above all, the summit noted that the deadline set by the Cotonou meeting had expired, and that the parties had not implemented the provisions of the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement. Consequently, the Heads of State or Government considered that their decision on sanctions had entered into force against all the warring factions as of 5 November 1992.

(Mr. Holo, Benin)

These energetic steps were necessary to put an end to this civil war, continuation of which threatened the peace and security of the West African subregion and therefore international peace and security. That is why a mandate was given to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member countries of the Committee of Nine, here present, to approach the Security Council as soon as possible in order to explain the details of the decision on sanctions and request its firm support so as to make the decision binding on the international community.

As this meeting is being held, we must draw a grim conclusion: Liberia is gradually becoming engulfed in a total war. The innocent people of that country are the victims of bombings, hardship, sickness and famine.

This disastrous situation requires urgent effective action, which our Governments earnestly hope will be adopted and implemented by the Security Council. Among other things, we have in mind: first, effective compliance with the cease-fire agreed upon by the Heads of State of ECOWAS on 28 November 1990; second, the disarming and encampment of the troops of the warring factions; third, the appointment of a Special Representative by the Secretary-General; fourth, a total arms embargo against Liberia, with the exception of arms for ECOMOG; fifth, a ban on export of Liberian resources by the warring parties from the areas they control. Those measures would create conditions that would allow the organization of free and democratic elections in Liberia.

To that end, we ask the Security Council to remain seized of this matter until peace has been totally restored in a country that was among the three African Members that signed the San Francisco Charter.

(Mr. Holo, Benin)

Furthermore, we believe that the alarming developments in this situation require an increase in humanitarian assistance. Therefore we would like the various steps to be adopted in this framework to be given immediate follow-up. The Liberian people, so sorely tried by civil war, expects the international community to support the efforts of ECOWAS in Liberia by agreeing to apply sanctions against all the warring parties that continue to violate the peace agreements.

The Economic Community of West African States, which our delegation has the honour to represent here, is firmly convinced that our work will allow us to show all peoples that international solidarity can in fact help to establish a climate of lasting peace on our continent in general and in particular in our subregion, an integral part of the South Atlantic that in 1986 the General Assembly proclaimed a zone of peace and cooperation encompassing 23 countries of Africa and Latin America.

Constant support from the Organization of African Unity is a source of encouragement for the Heads of State and Government of that subregion, as is the support of the Non-Aligned Movement, as can be seen from the conclusions of its last Summit, held in Jakarta in September of this year.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Benin for the kinds words he addressed to me and my country.

The next speaker is the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Interim Government of Liberia, His Excellency Mr. Gabriel Baccus Matthews, upon whom I now call.

Mr. MATTHEWS (Liberia): We wish to register our appreciation for the convening of the Council to discuss Liberia.

Please accept my thanks, Mr. President, for the honour and privilege you have afforded me to address the Council on the situation in Liberia and to advance some comments on the draft resolution the Council has before it today.

I wish to commend the Council for its earlier support given to the peace initiatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Liberia as evidenced by the statements of 22 January 1991 and 7 May 1992. These statements signal the Council's awareness of the threat that the ongoing crisis in Liberia poses to the peace and security of the West African subregion.

On behalf of the people of Liberia, it is my duty to advance the sad commentary that these two statements proved to be the most that Liberia, a founding Member of the United Nations and a nation that has always risen to the clarion call of its international duty, could elicit from the Security Council during the most critical hour of its history. Of course, the redeeming feature for the United Nations is the humanitarian assistance that has been given in response to the emergency, for which we have no less than enduring praise.

In 1990, at the height of the Liberian civil conflict, international opinion on Liberia was divided between the imperatives for humanitarian intervention, on the one hand, and the value of reaffirming classical conceptions of sovereignty, however anachronistic, on the other.

It was at that time that the leaders of the member States of ECOWAS, in their wisdom and humanity, took the bold and courageous decision to deploy in Liberia the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

In a decisive way, ECOMOG secured a cease-fire in a three-way war of attrition. It saved the Liberian people from conducting themselves to extinction. For this, we remain eternally grateful to all the member States of ECOWAS, particularly the Governments and peoples of Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, the Gambia and Mali, which are participating in ECOMOG.

Apart from ECOMOG, which has security responsibility, the ECOWAS Peace Plan called for the formation of an Interim Government of National Unity. The Peace Plan, formulated in consultations with Liberians, conceived the Interim Government to be an inclusive framework embodying all the warring parties, the political parties and the diverse interest groups of the country. All of these elememts and tendencies, except for the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, found common ground and formed an interim administration for the governance of the country. The mandate given the Interim Government by a national conference was to restore civil authority, organize the repatriation of Liberian refugees and prepare the country for free and fair internationally supervised elections within a year.

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

However, these hopeful prospects for elections have been consistently undermined and subverted by the main rebel faction, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), which has proved to have a different agenda. And the differences between that group and all other Liberians are over questions of power, State power; not who would wield it, but how it is to be acquired. To resolve these differences, ECOWAS has convened several meetings: from Bamako, Mali, in November 1990, to Lomé, Togo, in February and March 1991; to Monrovia, in March and April 1991; and then four meetings in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, between June and October 1991, which culminated in the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement of 30 October 1991.

With the Liberian problem as its principal preoccupation and its overriding distraction from development issues over the past two and half years, ECOWAS has exerted every effort to ensure a peaceful resolution of the Liberian crisis. Indeed, Liberians will arrive at peace only through negotiations. But that is precisely what ECOWAS has been pursuing. Liberians have negotiated, and agreements have been concluded. The problem has been the lack of will by the National Patriotic Front to implement the decisions reached.

The conclusions of the negotiations among the Liberians are outlined in the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement of 30 October 1991. It provides, inter alia, for the encampment and disarmament of the combatants under the supervision of ECOMOG, the establishment of an Electoral Commission and an Ad Hoc Supreme Court - to which appeals arising from electoral disputes may be referred - and the conduct of free and fair elections under international supervision and monitoring. It was agreed that the process would be completed in six months - that is, by April 1992.

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

But all of this was mere wishful thinking, since events have proven that the National Patriotic Front has never abandondoned its military agenda or its quest to secure power by force of arms.

In order to enhance the NPFL's willingness to cooperate, the Interim Government pursued a number of positive steps: we secured firm commitments from some countries to assist with funding for demobilizing and rehabiliting combatants; we declared an amnesty, to enhance the prospects for reconciliation; we secured food, to assist the NPFL in the prospective encampment of its troops. To give confidence to the NPFL with respect to the pending elections, we offered it the position of Chairman as well as majority seating on the Electoral Commission.

These overtures did not soften the NPFL's intransigence, and, as if our problems were not enough, its posture had the net effect of provoking the emergence of a fourth force. The United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), consisting largely of Liberian refugees, complained about the slow pace of the peace process. It announced that, by force of arms, it would compel the NPFL to comply with the Yamoussoukro IV Accord. ULIMO has since been engaging NPFL forces and wresting territory from them.

Despite these setbacks, the ECOWAS countries continued their efforts to find a solution to the Liberian crisis. Additional meetings were held: in Geneva, in April 1992; Dakar, in July 1992; and in Cotonou, in August and October 1992. Unfortunately, it would appear that the uncooperative stance of the NPFL forces increased in direct proportion to the number of meetings.

Their actions became bolder. They murdered some of the peace-keepers; they disarmed others and held several hundred hostage. On 15 October 1992,

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

they declared open, unprovoked warfare against ECOMOG, with an assault that attempted to seize the safe haven of Monrovia, the capital, and bombarded the civilian population with rocket fire.

With the failure of NPFL and ULIMO to effect a cease-fire and end hostilities, the sanctions, which were threatened by the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS in Dakar in July 1992 and decided upon in Cotonou in October 1992, were finally imposed, in Abuja this month.

That is the crux of what brings us here today. We are here because peace is not possible in Liberia unless these belligerent parties are divested of the prospect of acquiring additional arms. Peace is not achievable unless their capacity to wage war is curtailed. This is the reality of our situation.

The sanctions which we in ECOWAS declared at the Abuja Summit are binding on all ECOWAS member States. We call here for the Council's support of these measures so as to ensure broad international compliance.

These sanctions are not an end in themselves: their imposition has relevance for the objective of compelling the belligerent parties to abandon their military agenda in favour of a political one. These forces must be compelled to realize that military victory is neither an option nor a possibility in Liberia. The Security Council must act decisively to buttress, support and sustain the leaders in West Africa, who are continuing to pay a heavy price so that the people of Liberia may have a democratic option.

The Liberian situation has all the makings of one that could degenerate into a wider conflagration in West Africa. By its spill-over effects, it is already a clear and present danger to neighbouring Sierra Leone; it is slowly transforming West Africa into an arms market.

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

As the West African subregion responds to this subregional problem, a request to the Security Council to support the measures ECOWAS has taken should not be viewed as a mere appeal: it must be perceived in the context of the Council's responsibility to maintain international peace and security. We therefore commend the draft resolution to members for unanimous adoption.

We wish to thank the Council once more for its continuing interest in the Liberian crisis. We also avail ourselves of this opportunity to call the Council's attention to the recent Special Emergency Appeal for Displaced Persons in Liberia launched by the Secretary-General. The empathy and support of the international community would be most appreciated.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The next speaker is the representative of Senegal. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement now.

Mr. CISSE (Senegal) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its acting Chairman, President Abdou Diouf, I wish first to express our sincerest thanks to all the members of the Security Council for their swift response in acceding once again to a request by Africa for a meeting on the continuing conflict in Liberia. We are very grateful to you, Mr. President, and to the entire membership of the Council, for this demonstration of understanding of, and interest in, one of our most pressing concerns.

It is clear that Africa is a continent in difficulty, a continent whose situation, compared with that of the rest of the world, is hardly enviable. But, notwithstanding the difficulties of all kinds besetting our continent, Africa is continuing to do its utmost to take charge of its own destiny. Particularly determined efforts have been made to promote genuine African economic integration, which is vital to the future of our continent.

ECOWAS, which the 16 countries of the region established 17 years ago in 1975, expresses Africa's unshakeable determination to set up viable economic groupings to overcome the underdevelopment of our continent. Together with other African regional groups, ECOWAS has slowly but surely been tackling a task that is long and difficult but vital for our continent's progress and prosperity.

The Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, which the OAU concluded in Abuja, Nigeria, a little more than a year ago, in July 1991, makes these regional groupings the foundations of a future community embracing the whole continent. However, since 1989 the Liberian crisis has slowed the momentum gained by ECOWAS by significantly hampering the Community's ability to carry out its task of integration smoothly. Much time, much energy and

(Mr. Cissé, Senegal)

many resources that should have been devoted to other pressing tasks have been diverted by this crisis. The longer the crisis lasts, the longer there will be harmful delays in economic integration, without which there can be no viable future for our continent. That is one of the reasons why we have called for the support of the Council and its contribution to settling the crisis in Liberia.

I said that that was one of the reasons, but it is not the only one. The crisis in Liberia is doing more than just to delay our progress towards economic integration. It is also a genuine threat to the peace and security of the 16 countries of ECOWAS.

All the harm that this crisis has done to Liberia is well known. But in addition it has many destabilizing factors for the countries of the region. First, a huge quantity of weapons is now circulating in that part of Africa. Moreover, they are accompanied by a whole range of military experts of all types who are, more than ever before, selling themselves openly to the highest bidder in the international market. In addition, there are hundreds of thousands of refugees - more than a third of the population of Liberia - scattered about the various neighbouring countries, putting an increasingly intolerable burden on those countries, which have limited resources. Furthermore, the war has crossed the borders of Liberia, spreading to Sierra Leone. Perhaps tomorrow it will spread to other countries of the region.

Fortunately, however, the threat has been clearly perceived by the international community. The European Community, the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations have all tackled it, in a way that shows they understand the problem clearly.

(Mr. Cissé, Senegal)

Our hope today is that the international community will help ECOWAS, and thus the OAU, to find a solution to this disturbing problem. This should be made easier by the fact that the framework for a peaceful settlement - in the form of a peace plan - has already been prepared by the countries of the subregion, with, I would stress, the support of all the parties to the conflict. Better still, consensus was reached even on the arrangements for implementing the plan.

In this regard, the Council said in its statement of 7 May 1992 that

"the Yamoussoukro Accord of 30 October 1991 offers the best possible framework for a peaceful resolution of the Liberian conflict by creating the necessary conditions for free and fair elections in Liberia."

(S/PV.3071, p. 3)

Therefore, in the absence of a military settlement, which we do not hope for, it is only natural that economic weapons and an arms embargo should be used against those who trample under foot agreements they have freely entered into. It was in order to receive the Council's help that we asked for this meeting, convinced that at the present stage that is the best way to contribute to a future of peace in Liberia.

The Special Representative whom we hope the Secretary-General will appoint will be able to help inform the Council on the exact situation prevailing in Liberia so that it may consider suitable measures to settle the conflict.

I said earlier that Africans were making major efforts to take charge of the destiny of their continent. The intervention force of ECOMOG is a perfect example. Its establishment was unprecedented; the countries of a region, despite chronic difficulties and pressing domestic tasks, mobilized their

(Mr. Cissé, Senegal)

scant resources to mount a peace-keeping operation in order to save lives and promote the peaceful settlement of a fratricidal conflict. But the remarkable job done by this West African force over the past two years is now being systematically undermined by a faction that seems to think it is strong enough to make the peace process a hostage to its whims.

The success of the complementary efforts of ECOWAS and the United Nations in Liberia will largely determine the viability of the cooperation, so ardently desired, between the United Nations and regional arrangements in the quest to restore peace wherever it has been breached. That is the true raison d'être of Chapter VIII of the Charter and of the appeal rightly made by the Secretary-General in Chapter VII of his report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277). ECOMOG therefore needs the support of the United Nations more than ever before.

In the circumstances, our hope is that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General will be able, after an objective evaluation of the situation on the ground, to make recommendations along these lines, particularly as regards holding free and democratic elections in Liberia. We are sure that the Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of peace and security for the whole international community, will support us in our work for peace.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ESSY (Côte d'Ivoire)(interpretation from French): Allow me at the outset, Mr. President, to join preceding speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of your office and on the outstanding manner in which you are guiding the Council's discussions this month.

Allow me also to extend my warm congratulations to your precedessor, Ambassador Jean-Bernard Mérimée, who presided so effectively over the Council last month.

My colleague from Benin, whose country is exercising chairmanship of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Authority of Heads of State and Government, has just presented the objectives of the mission entrusted to the ECOWAS Heads of State. His statement, of course, has our full support.

The crisis in Liberia has been raised in the Security Council on several occasions. It has given rise to two presidential statements, on 27 January 1991 and 7 May 1992, and, more recently, a statement by the Secretary-General on 2 November last.

Today, at the unanimous behest of the ECOWAS Heads of State, we have come to the Security Council to ask for a greater involvement by the international community in the search for a peaceful settlement to this destructive conflict that has been devastating our subregion.

In addition to its human dimensions, the conflict is also jeopardizing the overall policy of economic integration that is today the principal goal of our subregional organization.

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

Indeed, it was at the thirteenth conference of the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government held at Banjul, Gambia, from 28 to 30 May 1990 that ECOWAS was first seized of the problem in Liberia, where extremely violent disturbances had been the daily lot of the Liberian people since December of 1989.

That intervention by ECOWAS in Liberian affairs had its roots in the provisions of article 4 B of the ECOWAS Mutual Assistance Protocol. The Standing Mediation Committee created at the Banjul summit meeting drew up the ECOWAS Peace Plan for Liberia. That plan advocated, first, an immediate cease-fire; secondly, the creation of a monitoring committee; thirdly, the creation of a transitional government and, lastly, the holding within a period of 12 months of free presidential elections monitored by an ECOWAS observer group.

Unfortunately, that plan came to naught. The ensuing summit meetings held at Bamako, Mali, on 27 and 28 November 1990 and at Lomé on 11 and 13 February 1991 did not resolve the crisis in Liberia.

Given the impasse that had been reached and the repeated incidents along the border between Liberia and Sierra Leone, the Heads of State of the subregion met at Yamassoukro and called upon President Félix Houphouët-Boigny, as dean of the area's leaders, to attempt to find a solution to the fratricidal conflict that was causing such bloodshed in Liberia.

Under the chairmanship of President Houphouët-Boigny, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Gambia and Togo were appointed to the Committee of Five at the ECOWAS Summit Meeting at Abuja with a mandate to seek to re-establish in Liberia conditions in which peace and security might be restored and an environment propitious to free and democratic elections established.

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

The Committee of Five met on four occasions at Yamoussoukro in 1991 and once at Geneva. All the agreements reached at those meetings between the parties concerned, namely, the Agreement of 30 October 1991 and the provisions added at the meeting held at Geneva on 6 and 7 April 1992, have been endorsed by ECOWAS, which has felt that the Agreement provided the best framework for a peaceful and lasting settlement of the Liberian conflict.

The Yamoussoukro Agreement of 30 October 1991 provided, inter alia, that the following tasks be completed prior to the holding of democratic elections: one, all entry and exit points into Liberia would be monitored by ECOMOG forces; two, roadblocks and checkpoints on the main Liberian highways would be removed to facilitate the free circulation of individuals; three, a buffer zone would be created along the Sierra Leone-Liberia border under the control of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG); four, all hostile foreign forces would be withdrawn from the territory of Sierra Leone; five, combatants would be disarmed and stationed in encampments under ECOMOG control; six, an Interim Elections Commission would be created and, seven, an International Negotiator Network group under Mr. Jimmy Carter would visit Liberia to assist the electoral process in Liberia.

We can state that some progress has been made with regard to the creation of the Interim Elections Commission and an ad hoc Supreme Court. Unfortunately, however, the same cannot be said with respect to the other elements of the Yamoussoukro Agreement, in particular with regard to the encampment and disarmament of the factions.

On the basis of strict neutrality President Houphouët-Boigny became fully involved in the mission entrusted to him by his peers. He entered into an ongoing dialogue with all factions to identify their respective concerns.

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

He offered a wealth of advice and suggestions to relieve their fears and encourage them to go along with the process of encampment and disarmament, two conditions essential to the holding of free, fair and democratic elections.

At the meeting of the Committee of Five on 16 and 17 September 1991 at Yamoussoukro, at the request of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) Senegal was invited and agreed to send a contingent to ECOMOG. Ironically, six Senegalese soldiers were to be killed at Vahun by NPFL during the creation of the buffer zone between Liberia and Sierra Leone.

At the Dakar Summit Meeting of ECOWAS, the Côte d'Ivoire also raised the problem of the faction known as the United Liberian Movement for Democracy (ULIMO), which was being used by the NPLF as a pretext to avoid implementing the encampment and disarmament of its troops.

The ECOWAS summit meeting at Dakar thus brought the ULIMO faction into the negotiating process of the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement and requested the Foreign Ministers of Benin, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire to contact the movement and persuade it to commit itself to the spirit and letter of the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement. Following the meetings at Cotonou and the missions sent by the ECOWAS Chairman to Sierra Leone and Guinea, agreement was obtained from ULIMO.

Some early implementation of the programmes under the Yamoussoukro Agreement drawn up by ECOMOG following the Summit Meetings at Yamoussoukro, Geneva and Dakar was begun following the deployment of certain ECOMOG elements in various parts of Liberia. However, shortly thereafter, following incidents in the areas under NPFL control, the situation reverted to the status quo ante.

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

Given the stagnation of the situation and the escalation of confrontations, ECOWAS could only reaffirm the right of ECOMOG to defend itself against any armed attack, regardless of the source.

After the many conferences of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, after the many ministerial meetings of the Standing Mediation Committee and the non-implementation of the various programmes of implementation of the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement, the Heads of States of ECOWAS had no choice but to resort to sanctions. In Abuja, they therefore decided to implement these sanctions, starting on 5 November 1992, against all belligerent parties that do not comply with the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement.

To this end, it is imperative that, with the support of the Security Council, an effective cease-fire be put into effect speedily in Liberia and that the Secretary-General, in accordance with the request of the Heads of States of ECOWAS, be able to appoint in the near future a Special Representative who would work in close cooperation with ECOWAS in implementing the peace plan of Yamoussoukro IV.

The presence of a United Nations observer group in Liberia, in the opinion of my delegation, could only help build confidence among the parties, which is what we want in order to promote the encampment and disarming of the factions.

One of the goals of the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement is reducing to the lowest possible level stockpiles of weapons on Liberian territory. The adoption of certain peaceful measures, together with an embargo on weapons headed towards Liberia, will have real effect only if these measures are part of broad international policing action. The success of such action would help bring about a speedy settlement to the problem of Liberia.

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

President Houphouët-Boigny has always said that Côte d'Ivoire will always be working for peace and will not be on the side of war. For Côte d'Ivoire, the implementation of the sanctions decided on in Abuja is part of the logic of peace, namely, to contribute to the disarming and encampment of the parties to the conflict.

All these facts, the chronological reminders of the Liberian tragedy, show that, in accordance with the provisions of Article 52 of the United Nations Charter, ECOWAS has spared no effort to bring about a peaceful settlement of this conflict.

It is now up to the Council to make a decisive contribution to this action taken by our subregional organization with a view to reaching the objective of peace in Liberia.

My colleagues and I are confident that the Council will respond favourably to our request, which falls within the framework of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "An Agenda for Peace".

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, His Excellency Mr. Thomas Sanon. I welcome him and I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. SANON (Burkina Faso) (interpretation from French): Allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for November. I should also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of France, Ambassador Mérimée.

(Mr. Sanon, Burkina Faso)

A long and painful chain of events has brought us before the Council today to consider along with members the agenda item entitled "The situation in Liberia". My colleague, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Benin, heads the delegation of our subregion and has just spoken on our behalf about the origins and developments of the situation in Liberia. As he stated, since July 1990 the Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have been trying to find a solution to the crisis through many meetings. Burkina Faso took part in all of these meetings with the firm determination to arrive at a negotiated solution to the conflict.

Nevertheless, it has not failed to express some reservations over certain measures and the manner in which they were implemented. To our mind, our concerns turned out to be well-founded. We have been the object of accusations, which we have answered, and since then Burkina Faso has given pride of place to a negotiated and peaceful solution to this conflict, even though we continue to be accused of actions that we are not responsible for. We remain convinced that pointing the finger at a scapegoat will not solve the issue before us. Accusations and complaints, in fact, have been made on both sides. We are convinced, again, that it is time to go beyond the stage of mutual recrimination and elaborate a common position, so that all together we might discharge our responsibilities to the Liberian people and the peoples of the subregion.

That is why we are here today.

Our conviction is that the situation in Liberia is first and foremost a Liberian matter; that we should not throw oil on the fire; and that no military solution could responsibly be contemplated.

(Mr. Sanon, Burkina Faso)

Any dynamic for peace in Liberia should have as its first objective a search for ways and means to resume dialogue among the Liberians themselves, without outside interference, so that they may arrive at agreed solutions.

We therefore agree with the results of the First Summit Meeting of the Committee of Nine, held at Abuja on 7 November 1992, that, inter alia, on the reaffirmation of the role of ECOMOG as a neutral disengagement force. In that connection, in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and pursuant to the relevant articles of our Constitution, on 13 November I spoke before my country's Parliament and asked that it authorize the addition of a Burkina Faso contingent to the ECOMOG troops.

We support the implementation of the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement of 30 October 1991, confirmed by the Geneva meeting of 7 April 1992, and thereby the organizing of free and democratic elections in Liberia.

In considering the steps laid down on 7 November 1992 at Abuja, the Security Council would be able, with a view to restoring peace and security to Liberia and to the subregion, to consider all the necessary steps for a cease-fire among all the warring parties. It is essential that the entire process should be such as to ensure that, after the cease-fire is obtained, there will be no resumption of the fighting, that all the warring parties will be deprived of the means of financing their war-making machinery and that the Liberian people will have the final word in the resolution of this crisis through free and democratic elections.

Burkina Faso's thinking remains and still is centred on ECOWAS: its dedication to the community ideal, its desire for peace and cooperation with all States in the subregion and its hope that subregional joint efforts will enable the Liberians finally to lay the groundwork for a lasting peace.

(Mr. Sanon, Burkina Faso)

It is in renewing this dedication before the Security Council that we join in the statement just made on behalf of the Committee of Nine of ECOWAS by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Benin.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Burkina Faso for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the Minister of the Interior of Gambia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. JABANG (Gambia): I should first of all like to join my colleagues who have already spoken in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to thank you and all the members of this body for kindly acceding to the request of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for the convening of a meeting of the Security Council to consider the situation in Liberia. Under your wise guidance and competent leadership our deliberations will, I have no doubt, be brought to a successful conclusion.

I should also like to express my delegation's appreciation for the Council's earlier expression of support for the people of Liberia in recognition of the useful role ECOWAS has been playing in finding a just, peaceful and lasting solution to the Liberian conflict. Your support is a great source of encouragement to Liberians in particular and to all West Africans in general in their attempt to resolve the problem in Liberia and its attendant human suffering.

In the same vein, I should also like to extend my delegation's sincere thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his request to the international community for humanitarian assistance for Liberia. Indeed, General Assembly resolution 46/147, entitled: "Assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Liberia", strikes a deep chord of gratitude in our hearts, and we wholeheartedly convey our thanks to all those who have been contributing financially and materially to this noble and humane objective.

(Mr. Jabang, Gambia)

The purpose of our presence here today is to seek further support and assistance from the Security Council in resolving the Liberian conflict.

The aim of ECOWAS since its inception has been to achieve economic development for our people to improve their living standards and to promote their dignity as a people, thereby ensuring global security in our subregion. Still, our shared aspirations in the economic and security fields continue to form the solid foundation of our subregional organization, ECOWAS, vis-à-vis our bilateral relations.

As the Council is already aware, we cannot achieve economic development in a climate of instability and disorder, for prosperity and war cannot coexist. A climate of peace and tranquillity is a necessary condition for any meaningful development.

The tragedy in Liberia which is impeding our efforts to achieve our socio-economic goals is unfolding daily and assuming more and more critical dimensions. Today we are witnessing an increased waste of material and human lives, particularly the lives of those patriotic peace-keepers. These atrocities are inflicted upon our people in Liberia by senseless and unpatriotic warring factions, thereby not only impeding the good work of our Heads of State and Government but also making our subregion one of the largest producers of refugees.

These warring factions are law-breakers, destroyers of the constitutional rights and liberties of our people in Liberia and, in fact, ultimately the destroyers of free and democratic States in our subregion. Enough is enough. This is the truth and reality of the Liberian situation.

The war in Liberia is not a natural disaster. It is a man-made disaster; therefore, it can only be settled by a man-made solution. Our first and

(Mr. Jabang, Gambia)

pre-eminent challenge today is the restoration of peace in Liberia in particular and the consolidation of democracy in our subregion in general.

It was in this spirit that the Yamoussoukro IV Accord was adopted by our Heads of State. The successful implementation of our collective commitments under Yamoussoukro IV depends largely on the adoption of the draft resolution before the Security Council, which calls for a general arms embargo.

If crimes and atrocities are to be controlled, we must control the weapons with which they are committed, and we must resolutely put an end to the easy availability of those deadly weapons.

Peace, after all, is the bedrock of all our hopes. It is for this reason that we are seeking the support of the Security Council and the adoption of the draft resolution before it.

Peace cannot be exported to our subregion. We must create domestic conditions that are conducive to the restoration of peace in Liberia, and this is what Yamoussoukro IV is all about. This is all we are seeking from this Council.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Gambia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Guinea. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. KOUYATE (Guinea) (interpretation from French): It is with a mixture of comfort and hope that my delegation has the honour to speak today on a timely question of great priority which calls for a prompt and effective response on the part of the international community in general and of Africa in particular.

(Mr. Kouyate, Guinea)

Indeed, since the outbreak of the Liberian conflict at the end of December 1989 it has brought to the martyred people of that land and the States of the subregion immeasurable consequences that jeopardize peace and security.

(Mr. Kouyate, Guinea)

As a result of the violence in that fraternal country, hundreds of thousands have lost their lives or their property. An entire nation, once prosperous and united, is being torn apart by rival factions whose only objective is quite obviously political power. I hardly need add that the spectre of death and desolation has caused a major migration of people tossed from Monrovia to neighbouring countries in search of asylum.

In the face of this tragic situation, the subregion has devised and proposed to the parties to the conflict a peace plan and an intervention force with a view to restoring peace and security. The peace plan is aimed at a peaceful solution of the conflict and calls for the following: an immediate cease-fire; the encampment and disarmament of troops; and the organization of free, fair and democratic elections.

To that end, ECOWAS - through the Standing Mediation Committee, the Committee of Five, the Committee of Nine and the various summit meetings of Heads of State or Government - has discussed the matter and on a number of occasions has organized talks among the warring parties. Those talks led to the important agreements adopted at Bamako in November 1990, at Lomé in February 1990 and at Yamoussoukro in October 1991.

At Jakarta, the Non-Aligned Movement addressed this matter and expressed its support for the efforts of ECOWAS.

But the repeated rejections and the obstinately belligerent attitude of one of the parties constitute the main obstacle to the implementation of the various agreements. That is why at the summit meeting at Dakar in July 1992 the ECOWAS Heads of State or Government, having considered the situation in Liberia, set a deadline of 30 days for that faction to demonstrate its willingness to respect the commitments it had freely entered into.

(Mr. Kouyate, Guinea)

Renewed attacks by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) against the Economic Community Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) demonstrated the NPFL's lack of cooperation towards bringing peace to Liberia.

This deterioration in the situation prompted ECOWAS, following the Abuja summit of Heads of State or Government in November 1992, to approach the Security Council to seek its involvement in the quest for a lasting solution to this painful fratricidal conflict.

Aware of their responsibilities, the ECOWAS countries showed what courageous, positive action a subregional organization can take when collective peace and security are threatened. After so much effort and sacrifice, ECOWAS now needs the support and cooperation of the international community in conformity with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

A nation is dying at a time when the ideas of peace and collective security are emerging in contemporary international relations as priority objectives to which the United Nations is committed. War is decimating and scattering a people at a time when international relations are opening up to dialogue, solidarity and cooperation. Like other peoples, the Liberian people aspire to the well-being promised by this new era of détente, but the weapons and the ambitions of their own sons stand in the way.

This tragedy should not merely move us: it should mobilize the energy and the cooperation of States Members of the United Nations towards restoring the rights of the Liberian people. Moreover, resolving the Liberian crisis through dialogue would be a factor for the promotion of peace fully in keeping with the noble Charter mandate of the Security Council.

Consistent with its fundamental principles of freedom, justice and peace, the Republic of Guinea urgently appeals to the Security Council to support the

(Mr. Kouyate, Guinea)

efforts of ECOWAS, inter alia through the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Agreement. My delegation is convinced that, to that end, the early appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General would help the Security Council learn more about the tragedy in Liberia and the heavy burden it places on neighbouring countries and on other States of the subregion.

The Security Council must meet this challenge to the international community in order to enhance its growing prestige and strengthen the credibility of the United Nations. By adopting the draft resolution before it, the Council would be granting justice to the thousands of men, women and children who have died, victims of intolerance and unsatisfied ambition. By adopting the draft resolution, the Council would give hope to the homeless, the refugees and the displaced, whose suffering will end only when peace returns to Liberia and when normal constitutional life is retored.

The Council's decision and the monitoring of its implementation will bring relief to the countries of the subregion.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, His Excellency Major-General Ike Nwachukwu. I welcome him and invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. NWACHUKWU (Nigeria): Permit me, Sir, on behalf of my delegation to join earlier speakers in extending to you warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. I have no doubt that with your rich experience the work of the Council as it tackles flash-points of political tension world-wide is indeed in competent and able hands.

(Mr. Nwachukwu, Nigeria)

My delegation also wishes to express its gratitude to all the other members of the Security Council for their quick response to the request of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for a discussion of the Liberian crisis.

Two years ago, when the United Nations was facing its ordeal in the Persian Gulf, the Liberian crisis was already a fact. Let us recall the deplorable carnage in Liberia, which shamed the world during those traumatic days.

The countries of the Economic Community of West African States, which went into Liberia through the ECOWAS cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), were holding the fort not only for themselves but also for the United Nations in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter, as well as for other States which had a stake and a responsibility in the conflict but which were otherwise engaged.

Now we are witness to the ordeal of ECOMOG, and we feel entitled to claim the staunch support of the United Nations. Many things have been said in praise of the ECOMOG initiative but, in our view, by far the most relevant was the observation that ECOMOG - the ECOWAS peace-keeping force - is a refreshing example of collective self-help in a subregion that has seen many conflicts and that, more often than not, has depended on others to rescue it from its travails. In that sense, ECOMOG is an important building-block in the new world order of shared responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security which we seek to establish.

But in a higher sense ECOMOG is an earnest of the resolve of the countries of the West African subregion not merely to pay lip-service to democracy, but to rise to its responsibilities and stand up in its defence when the occasion calls, and in spite of the costs.

(Mr. Nwachukwu, Nigeria)

The Member States participating in ECOMOG do so at great cost, and in a situation fraught with the danger emanating from their own delicate preoccupation with the tasks of nation-building. They have also sustained substantial costs in materials and men. These sacrifices must be allowed to bear fruit. Otherwise, the cost in terms of security and stability in our subregion will be incalculable.

Peace-keeping and peacemaking in our time require great diligence and resourcefulness and political will. We believe it is generally accepted that the ECOMOG forces have approached their duty in a remarkably even-handed manner with forbearance and a high sense of responsibility. So great, in fact, has been their forbearance that in the past few months Mr. Charles Taylor and his National Patrotic Front of Liberia have felt able to pile up against ECOMOG indignities and humiliations such as would in other circumstances have been quite beyond their powers.

It is therefore a cruel misinterpretation to try to portray ECOMOG as part of the problem in Liberia. Nothing could be further from the truth. And nothing could more tragically pander to Mr. Taylor's propaganda and that of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia. None of the member States of ECOMOG has any territorial ambitions in Liberia. None of them has any objectives of hegemony. Our principal goals consist of ending the carnage, promoting peace between the various factions and ethnic groups and establishing a firm basis for democratic elections.

The main problem is that Taylor is afraid of elections. He prefers to attempt to shoot his way into the executive mansion in Monrovia. In his pursuit of power through violence, he has constituted himself as a scourge on his own people. He is now no more than another tyrant on the African scene.

(Mr. Nwachukwu, Nigeria)

In the past month the delicate peace that ECOMOG had succeeded in establishing has been shattered. Hatred and dreadful refugee problems stalk Monrovia once again, and the repercussions of the conflict bid fair to destabilize and engulf our entire subregion.

Worse still, as our subregional organization noted at its last meeting, there is mounting evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity by Charles Taylor and his men, of which the recent murders of thousands of Liberians and foreigners, including five American nuns and more than 160 schoolchildren, may turn out to be only the tip of iceberg. In the past two years, Taylor has demonstrated prodigious perfidy by going back over and over again on agreements solemnly entered into in the presence of our most revered statesmen. His contempt for the mediation of ECOWAS leaders reached its height when he launched a massive attack on Monrovia in response to the general call for a cease-fire.

The world has learned from long experience that peace is neither secured nor maintained by forbearance alone. It has become well accepted over the years that a peace-keeping force can in the performance of its duties resort to the use of force to defend itself when it is a victim of unprovoked armed attack, to avert tragic incidents that constitute crimes against humanity, and to implement essential details of a peace plan over which parties to the conflict have agreed, as in the case of Liberia. In these critical days, this is the message we hope all friends will bear in mind. In our subregion, we do enjoy the friendship of many powerful countries by a long historical association. Now is the time for them to be true friends in our time of need.

(Mr. Nwachukwu, Nigeria)

They must not use their influence, such as it may be, to play devil's advocate or to undermine the resolve of our organization. They should remain mindful of the fact that success in peace-keeping for our subregion is at the same time success for our world body and for world peace. They should assist to the best of their ability in providing humanitarian aid to the teeming masses of refugees unleashed on the subregion by Taylor's mindless onslaught. They should join in putting the weight of the United Nations behind the prohibition of arms transfers to the warring factions in order to promote a conducive environment for free and fair elections in Liberia. They should join us in condemning the condemnable, namely war crimes and crimes against humanity, bearing in mind that those who appear to abet Charles Taylor's intransigence are equally culpable, by association, of those hideous crimes. Our friends should hold themselves in readiness, under the United Nations, to monitor elections in Liberia, when elections come, which we believe should be soon. But above all we say to them: Do not underestimate the capability and the resolve of our subregional body. Give us your support, and we will accomplish the task of restoring peace and democracy to Liberia in accordance with the wishes of the Liberian people and the political leaders of the West African subregion, ECOWAS.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria for the kind words he addressed to me.

At this stage I should like to point out that members have received copies of document S/24827, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared during previous consultations of the Council.

The next speaker is the representative of Sierra Leone. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. KOROMA (Sierra Leone): Mr. President, I thank you most profoundly for affording me this opportunity to appear before the Council on this important matter, the situation in Liberia, which affects my country, Sierra Leone.

In thanking you, I should like to join with those who have congratulated you on your election to guide the affairs of the Council this month.

I have been advised that the affairs of the Council were competently and successfully conducted last month by the Permanent Representative of France.

With the exception of Liberia itself, my country has been the most seriously affected victim of the ongoing conflict in Liberia. As I speak here today, thousands of the civilian population of my country have been killed, needlessly losing their lives. Thousands have been injured, and an estimated half a million have either become refugees, with little food or no shelter, or have found themselves displaced within their own country.

My fellow citizens who have not been killed by Charles Taylor and his hordes have had to wander the forest for days, ferreting for food while fleeing from the fugitive warlord Charles Taylor and his rebel fighters.

Because of the armed invasion of my country by Taylor and his rampaging hordes, our national economy is in ruins, as the Government has had to spend hard-earned resources to defend our country from Charles Taylor, who for more than a year now has been occupying and ravaging some of the most productive areas of my country in terms of agriculture and diamond production, looting and smuggling those products to acquire arms to continue his armed aggression and to enrich himself personally.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

Members of the Council may ask why and how this human tragedy has hit my country. They may ask why Sierra Leone today faces a mortal danger to its security because of the conflict in Liberia. The reasons are not far to seek: By dint of geography, Sierra Leone is a neighbour of Liberia, and the two countries share a long land and a maritime boundary. There is even a bridge spanning one of the boundary rivers and linking the two countries. People of the same ethnic backgrounds reside on either side of the international boundary, while in many parts of Sierra Leone large concentrations of Liberians have settled over the years.

It was against this background that when the ongoing civil war broke out in Liberia and started to devastate that country, the thousands of Liberians who fled their country received sanctuary in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leoneans opened their homes, their schools, hospitals and workplaces to thousands of Liberians who had fled their country. Villagers in my country who never had enough to spare from one harvest to the next shared what little they had with fleeing Liberians.

With the intensification of the armed conflict in Liberia, with the total breakdown of law and order as Liberians turned on each other and engaged in orgies of mass killings - even of women and children who had sought sanctuary in a church - with other unspeakable atrocities being committed, and in the absence of any effective authority in that country, the States of the West African subregion, including Sierra Leone, after great soul-searching and purely for humanitarian reasons, basing themselves on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) - which calls for solidarity, unity, mutual trust and good neighbourliness - and convinced that the continuation of the Liberian conflict

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

was a threat to the peace and security of the subregion, decided to send a peace-keeping force, the Economic Community Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), to Liberia to put a stop to the mass killings and bring the fighting between the various factions to an end.

It was because of this humanitarian concern and because Sierra Leone happens to be a neighbouring country of Liberia and had allowed its territory to be used as a base for the peace-keeping forces in Liberia that one of the factions in the conflict in Liberia, headed by Charles Taylor and his band of National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebels, launched a premeditated armed attack against my country. In his perfidious act against my country, Charles Taylor was motivated by the fact that the Government of Sierra Leone, to prevent the civil war in Liberia from esalating and to avoid prolonging it, had denied the use of our territory by Taylor to infiltrate weapons into Liberia. So no sooner was he able to capture the border region of Liberia than, as an act of revenge, he decided to launch an armed attack against my country.

Herein lies the paradoxical and agonizing experience for my country: because we allowed our territory to be used to bring peace to Liberia, Charles Taylor and his hordes of rebels, in violation of international law and in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, launched an armed invasion of my country and continues to occupy parts of it.

Also in violation of the basic tenets of humanitarian principles, Charles Taylor has killed and continues to kill and maim innocent civilians, including those villagers who had earlier extended sanctuary to Liberians fleeing their homeland, by attacking them in their sleep and putting their homes to the torch.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

At the same time, this warlord and his rebels have continued to cause social and ecological depredations in the areas of their operations, destroying public buildings, banks - such as Barclays - schools, hospitals and clinics.

Thus it can be seen that, both in terms of human life and of material destruction, the conflict in Liberia has proved very costly for my country and agonizing for its people.

Meanwhile, all efforts by the States in the subregion and by this Organization to bring the Liberian conflict to a peaceful resolution by calling for a cease-fire between the various factions, for the disarmament and encampment of their fighting men and for the holding of free and democratic elections to be held have come to naught because of the intransigence of Taylor and his NPFL rebels. He has failed to comply with any of the agreements for a peaceful resolution of the conflict into which he voluntarily entered. Instead of observing a cease-fire and disarming and encamping his fighters, Taylor has used every form of subterfuge and chicanery to scuttle all those agreements and, recently, he has launched a military offensive against the peace-keeping force in Liberia with heavy weapons he had been receiving and stockpiling while pretending to be seeking a negotiated settlement to the conflict. Instead of withdrawing from the parts of my country that he and his rebel fighters are now occupying, Taylor, like all tyrants before him, has lately been making territorial claims against my country, blaming Britain for the present international boundaries that exist between Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Sierra Leone, as a small country that has remained faithful to this Organization and over the years has invested its international security in it, is therefore appearing before this Council to request its assistance in

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

repelling Taylor's aggression. This body, as the custodian of international peace and security, particularly the security of small nations, cannot sit idly by while a group of bandits let loose by the total breakdown of law and order in a neighbouring State and armed and/or supported by some States in the African region that see it as their mission to spread world revolution in the name of religion, continues to engage in a campaign of destabilization and terror against a peaceful and vulnerable Member of this Organization.

On behalf of my country and its people, I appeal to the Council to take urgent action to put a stop, once and for all, to the brigandage of Charles Taylor and his NPFL rebels, which, if not stopped in its tracks, could lead to instability and insecurity in the whole subregion. Today it is Sierra Leone that is under attack, but there are other small and equally vulnerable countries in the subregion that should not be allowed to fall prey to a fugitive warlord whose aim is to make Liberia a narcocentre for drug trafficking in our region if he is once able to shoot his way into power in Monrovia.

We believe that the international community should not tolerate such criminal conduct against a State Member of this Organization. The Government and people of Sierra Leone hold Charles Taylor responsible for the armed attack he launched against my country and for the human and material damage he has inflicted against my country and its people.

Sierra Leone therefore supports the call on this Council by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to impose a complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Liberia, especially against Charles Taylor and his NPFL rebels, and to request all States to respect the measures established by ECOWAS to bring about a peaceful solution to the

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

conflict in Liberia. In this way, Taylor's aggression against my country would be stemmed and his pillaging stopped.

Sierra Leone, because of the ordeal it has had to experience as a result of its action on behalf of the international community, calls on the United Nations to render it all necessary military, economic and diplomatic support to enable it to resist Charles Taylor's aggression.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

The Economic Community of West African States also deserves the full support of this Organization, acting as it is, and at great cost to some of its Member States, on behalf of the international community to restore peace to Liberia.

I am sure the Council does not want to see another Somalia in Liberia. The United Nations cannot fail to give its full support to ECOWAS. Otherwise, the renewed call for greater cooperation between the United Nations and the regional organizations for the maintenance of international peace and security would have suffered a setback. A decisive and resolute measure on the part of the Security Council will send the right message to all the factions in Liberia - but to Charles Taylor, in particular - that the international community expects them to comply with the peace efforts of ECOWAS in the interest of their country.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Sierra Leone for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Togo. I welcome him and I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. NATCHABA (Togo) (interpretation from French): First of all, I should like to pay a tribute to you, Mr. President, to your predecessor and to all the members of the Security Council for the sense of responsibility demonstrated in acceding to the request of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to convene the Council in order to consider the situation in Liberia.

As it is being held at a particularly critical moment in the Liberian tragedy, this meeting no doubt will go down in history as an effort in conflict settlement.

(Mr. Natchaba, Togo)

If we analyse it, the tragedy of the Liberian people for several years has been calling for universal awareness and international solidarity, because of the scope of material loss and the loss of human lives and of the numerous ramifications of the conflict for the West African subregion.

Presented at the outset, and even for a long time, as a mere civil war and hence an internal matter, the Liberian crisis has quickly become a powerful breeding ground for economic, political and social destabilization in other countries of West Africa, in particular, the neighbouring countries of Liberia. In this connection, we should emphasize that each country in the subregion might have its own potential Liberia.

In Liberia our Heads of State have spared no effort, but as President Eyadema of Togo has always stated, everyone can become tired except those who are seeking peace. Yes, we are seeking peace - peace for our brothers in Liberia. Massive efforts made so far by the Heads of State of ECOWAS to solve the conflict in Liberia proceed from the noble desire to preserve peace and stability as factors for hastening subregional economic integration and bringing the peoples of West Africa closer together. Our Heads of State and Government, in a movement of solidarity and exemplary joint action, have been making their contribution to a peaceful settlement of this conflict, thereby affirming their determination to eliminate forever a tragedy that could engulf the entire subregion.

From one meeting to another, from Lomé to Yamassoukro, from one summit meeting to another, from Dakar to Cotonou and Abuja, the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS have given irrefutable proof of their determination to prevent the disintegration of Liberia, to put an end to the inhuman suffering of the Liberian people, to eliminate threats to neighbouring countries and to

(Mr. Natchaba, Togo)

create the necessary conditions for the dawning of a new constitutional order, based on democracy and serving as a guarantee for national unity, social cohesion and political stability.

Significant in this regard is the peace plan of ECOWAS, which offers the best framework for restoring peace in Liberia.

Also significant is the deployment of the Monitoring Group of ECOWAS (ECOMOG), a neutral peace-keeping force, responsible especially for ensuring compliance with the cease-fire and for the encampment and disarming of the warring factions. Here we should like to pay a most earnest tribute to the men of ECOMOG who, at risk to their lives, are facing with determination the death-dealing folly of Charles Taylor's faction.

Thus, the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS have fully confirmed the relevance and usefulness of the regional approach to international peace and security.

However, non-compliance with the cease-fire by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) of Charles Taylor, the scope and increase in the atrocities and the risk of engulfing other countries in the subregion, the sometimes death-dealing attacks perpetrated by Taylor's men against ECOMOG soldiers, the cold-blooded killing of foreign nuns - all of these facts demonstrate clearly the great complexity of the Liberian conflict and the need for obtaining the support of the Security Council in efforts at solving this dispute. It is in this context that the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, faithful to their commitment to find a peaceful solution, deemed it absolutely necessary to involve fully the international community in efforts at settling the Liberian crisis.

(Mr. Natchaba, Togo)

In so doing, they had in mind Chapter VIII of the Charter, which lays down that the Security Council shall encourage the development of pacific settlement of local disputes through regional arrangements or agencies and that the Council shall, where appropriate, utilize such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority.

They also had in mind the absolute need to adopt measures likely to compel all parties to the conflict to comply scrupulously with the Yamossoukro IV Accords.

In requesting assistance from the Security Council, ECOWAS, as a subregional mechanism for promoting peace and security, intends to reaffirm its dedication to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to break the deadlock in the peace process in Liberia.

It is thus important that the Security Council, the principal organ of the world Organization for maintaining international peace and security, give its full support to ECOWAS efforts and initiatives.

That is why we feel it essential that the Council adopt a number of urgent measures, namely, the levying of an embargo against arms and military equipment destined for Liberia, with the exception of those for ECOMOG, and authorizing the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative to Liberia in order to evaluate the situation and to consider the means of deploying a United Nations observer group with the mandate of assisting ECOMOG in monitoring the cease-fire and the electoral process.

In any case, the international community will soon be called upon - that is, after the restoration of peace - to make an adequate contribution to the rebuilding of Liberia and to the return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons.

(Mr. Natchaba, Togo)

After the end of the cold war and the spectacular increase in the United Nations family, the peoples of the world cherish the legitimate hope of living in a new era of peace, stability and prosperity.

That means that today, more than ever, the world Organization is facing a historic responsibility, namely, to serve as an essential anchor for the initiatives taken in various parts of the world to prevent threats to peace and to settle conflicts peacefully.

The risks of African marginalization are real if the considerable economic and financial difficulties besetting the continent are accompanied by an increase in the persistence and aggravation of conflicts.

Action here and now to put an end to the sufferings of the Liberian people and to restore peace in Liberia is the message the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States are sending to the Security Council, a message to which they expect an energetic and urgent response to match the new prestige of the United Nations and the increasing authority and effectiveness of the Security Council.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Togo for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. MUMBENGEGWI (Zimbabwe): My delegation would like to welcome Their Excellencies the Ministers of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) who are with us today. We would particularly like to thank them for their statements, which have revealed to us the grim situation in Liberia and the tragic consequences, both in Liberia itself and in the subregion as a whole, of the spiralling violence and carnage. We commend them for their initiative in bringing to the Security Council concrete proposals aimed at resolving the situation in Liberia.

(Mr. Mumbengegwi, Zimbabwe)

The crisis in Liberia has been with us since December 1989. Three years later, with over 60,000 innocent civilians dead and thousands of refugees spilling over into neighbouring countries, it can no longer be considered a purely domestic issue to be resolved by the Liberians themselves. The conflict has now spilled over into neighbouring countries and thus presents a threat not only to the region but to international peace and security. ECOWAS has left no stone unturned in the search for a peaceful resolution of the Liberian conflict. Meeting in Yamoussoukro, Geneva, Cotonou and Abuja, the West African States, with the full support of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), have managed to formulate a credible framework within which the Liberian conflict can be resolved.

The Security Council has on two occasions, on 22 January 1991 and on 7 May 1992, pronounced itself in support of those efforts and of the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement as the best possible framework for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Liberia. ECOWAS has expended scarce resources and precious lives in that quest. It is appropriate that it now seeks the full support of the international community in the furtherance of its efforts.

In the spirit of the cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, and as a natural and logical follow-up to the support previously expressed by the Council for the efforts of ECOWAS, the Security Council should now throw its weight behind the call for full compliance by all the parties to the Liberian conflict with their obligations under the Yamoussoukro IV Agreements. In addition, my delegation believes that the imposition of an arms embargo would go a long way towards reducing armaments in the country and thereby eliminating much of the current wanton loss of life. In this regard we call upon all Member States to respect such an arms embargo.

(Mr. Mumbengegwi, Zimbabwe)

Zimbabwe would have liked to see the Council take immediate concrete measures on Liberia along the lines that had been requested by the ECOWAS delegation. However, my delegation also fully appreciates the difficulty of doing so in the absence of a report and recommendations by the Secretary-General. My delegation therefore welcomes the request for the Secretary-General to dispatch expeditiously to Liberia a Special Representative to evaluate how best the United Nations can cooperate with ECOWAS towards implementing the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement, not only in respect of bringing about a durable cessation of hostilities but also with respect to the democratic process that will raise Liberia up from its present nightmare.

There are those who constantly remind us of the unprecedented burden currently being borne by the Organization in the sphere of peace-keeping operations and in the conduct and monitoring of electoral processes. It is the view of my delegation that the price of peace can never be too high. In any case it cannot be denied that investing in peace is far cheaper, both in human and financial terms, than investing in war. It is therefore our hope that the Secretary-General will bring recommendations to the Council that will enable the international community to become more actively involved in the peace effort in Liberia. In the meantime my delegation urges the international community to step up the humanitarian relief effort for the suffering people of Liberia.

The success of regional efforts in resolving the many conflicts we witness today all over the globe can only be enhanced if those regional efforts can count on wider international support when they need it. Liberia offers such an opportunity to demonstrate the wide range of options in the cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations. Zimbabwe

(Mr. Mumbengegwi, Zimbabwe)

therefore welcomes the draft resolution under consideration by the Council. We regard it as an important first step in the international community's involvement in the peace effort in Liberia.

Mr. VORONTSOV (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): The Russian delegation would first like to welcome those Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) who have come to this meeting of the Security Council and thank them for the statements that we have just heard. We view their participation in the work of the Council as further proof of the growing cooperation between the regional organizations and the United Nations in the interest of international peace and security.

The delegation of the Russian Federation shares the serious concern at the unceasing armed conflict in Liberia. The failure of some belligerent Liberian groups to implement the plan for a peaceful settlement in Liberia agreed to under the auspices of ECOWAS will lead to an exacerbation of the situation in that country and is fraught with danger not only to neighbouring States but also to international peace and security, particularly in West Africa. There is also an ongoing escalation of violence against the civilian population that threatens to become a "Somali option" for Liberia, which could have the most serious consequences.

Russia has consistently advocated and continues to advocate, inter alia in the Security Council, that a solution to the Liberian problems should be sought primarily on a regional basis. That was also the thrust of the recent appeal made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia to the participants in the ECOWAS meeting held at Cotonou in October of this year, particularly to the Liberian parties represented there, to show a spirit of realism and responsibility for the fate of their country and to start seeking mutually acceptable solutions to this protracted conflict.

(Mr. Vorontsov, Russian Federation)

Experience in the settlement of many crisis situations, including some in Africa, convincingly shows that the only realistic and productive way is the way of political dialogue and mutual concessions.

It is unfortunate that the belligerent Liberian factions are refusing to heed the Security Council's appeal calling upon them to abide by and implement the provisions of the various agreements regarding the peace process, including refraining from any actions that threaten the security of neighbouring States.

We deem it useful, given the concrete situation, to combine regional efforts with the efforts of the United Nations, particularly in the sphere of guaranteeing security and preventing and resolving conflicts. Regarding the situation in Liberia itself, the Russian delegation regards as extremely important and very timely the Security Council's adoption of resolute measures with regard to those groups that are refusing to abide by the Yamoussoukro Accord, which is an effective basis for a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Once again, we appeal to all parties to the conflict to take reciprocal steps to guide the Liberian settlement to political, non-violent solutions within the context of the plan agreed to under the auspices of ECOWAS.

The Russian delegation supports the draft resolution contained in document S/24827 and hopes that its adoption will foster efforts being undertaken by members of ECOWAS with a view to effective compliance with the cease-fire agreement and also with other agreements concerning the peace process in Liberia, which ultimately will make it possible to establish the necessary conditions for holding democratic elections in the country.

(Mr. Vorontsov, Russian Federation)

The Russian Federation, for its part, is prepared to promote such efforts and to cooperate to that end with all countries and organizations interested in arriving at a settlement.

Mr. JESUS (Cape Verde): I welcome the presence here of the Ministers of ECOWAS, who have come to discuss and to speak on this very momentous problem affecting the West African subregion, to which my own country belongs.

For years now, the people of Liberia have been enduring one of the most painful and tragic situations in their history. The civil war that has been raging in Liberia has caused the loss of many lives and has plunged that once prosperous and orderly country into economic hardship and disarray.

Liberia, one of the first independent nations in Africa, is unfortunately one painful example among many in our continent of the destructiveness caused by the use of violence as a means of solving political differences and attaining power. The result of the use of such violent means is well known to us all: death, destruction, famine, waves of refugees and displaced persons, and widespread fear.

The parties to this fratricidal conflict should stop this irrational use of violence and settle their differences through peaceful means. In this regard, it is important that the parties cease the hostilities, respect the cease-fire agreed to in 1990 and abide by the agreements they have entered into in order to bring about peace and stability in the country.

The efforts of ECOWAS countries to assist in achieving a political solution to the conflict and to bring about political stability are commendable, and they deserve all our support. In this context, we call on

(Mr. Jesus, Cape Verde)

all the parties to the conflict to cooperate with ECOWAS in its efforts to assist in the process of bringing peace and stability to Liberia, for the ECOWAS Peace Plan remains the best framework for a solution to the Liberian crisis.

The holding of free and fair elections is the only way out if a just and long-lasting solution is to prevail. Those who still insist on taking power by force should know that they will not find sympathy in, and indeed will not be recognized by, the international community.

The dimension that the conflict in Liberia has assumed has become a destabilizing factor in West Africa as a whole and poses a real threat to international peace and security. Therefore, it is timely that the United Nations, and particularly the Council, be meaningfully involved in the process of actively promoting a peaceful solution to the conflict.

In our view, the Council and the United Nations in general should play a more active role in helping Africa cope with the many conflicts that unfortunately are destroying many countries in our continent.

Today's debate is a good development, for it represents the first important step in the right direction, and the draft resolution that we will be adopting at the end of this debate, if properly and promptly implemented, will be of immense value in promoting an agreed peaceful solution to the conflict.

The resolution imposes a mandatory arms embargo, a measure that in our view is long overdue, for the proliferation of arms and ammunition can only exacerbate and fuel the armed conflict in Liberia.

(Mr. Jesus, Cape Verde)

The draft resolution also requests the Secretary-General to dispatch a Special Representative to Liberia to urgently evaluate the situation and report to the Council. We take this measure as a first step that will, it is hoped, indicate how the United Nations can play a useful and decisive role in a peaceful solution to the conflict in Liberia.

Equally important is the United Nations response to the humanitarian needs of the Liberian people. The many displaced persons who are roaming about the country and the thousands of Liberians who took refuge in the neighbouring countries are in dire need of assistance.

We hope that the United Nations system, States and humanitarian organizations will increase their humanitarian assistance to the victims of the conflict in Liberia.

Mr. LI Daoyu (China) (interpretation from Chinese): First of all, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, I should like to welcome warmly the ministerial delegation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), headed by Mr. Holo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Benin, and thank the delegatiom for its presentation on the recent development of the Liberian crisis.

Like other countries, the Chinese Government is deeply concerned with the development of the situation in Liberia. The armed conflict in Liberia, which broke out in 1989, has been going on for three years. It has not only inflicted heavy losses of property and life upon the country and its people, but also threatened the peace and security of the neighbouring States and the region as a whole. In the past three years or more the international community, and especially ECOWAS, have made enormous efforts for the settlement of the Liberian question. In August 1990 ECOWAS dispatched peace-keeping forces to Liberia and, in November of the same year, helped the parties involved in the conflict reach a cease-fire agreement. In October last year the ECOWAS countries concerned held a summit meeting in Yamoussoukro and adopted the Yamoussoukro IV Accord on such questions as a cease-fire and disarming forces of various parties in Liberia, thus bringing new hope for the political settlement of the Liberian question. We appreciate the efforts and positive proposals made by ECOWAS for a peaceful solution to the Liberian crisis. However, since October this year, the Liberian situation has once again undergone grave deterioration. Repeated armed conflicts have again cast a shadow over the peace process in Liberia.

The Chinese delegation is concerned about the renewed deterioration in the Liberian situation. We urge all the parties to the conflict in Liberia to

(Mr. Li Daoyu, China)

cease immediately their confrontation, realize a cease-fire at an early date and, with the mediation efforts of ECOWAS, earnestly implement the Yamoussoukro IV Accord so as to create conditions conducive to a peaceful solution. We hope that the parties concerned in Liberia will, in the interest of the nation and people, seek a peaceful solution through negotiations and dialogue at an early date for the ultimate realization of national reconciliation, so as to achieve speedy restoration of domestic peace and stability and embark upon national reconstruction.

The Chinese Government and people are deeply sympathetic with Liberia and its people for their sufferings and enormous losses. The Chinese delegation appreciates and supports the African countries, the United Nations and the international community in all their efforts to stop the bloodshed in Liberia, seek a peaceful settlement of the conflict through negotiations and bring about lasting peace and security in that country. We hope that with the joint efforts of the African countries and the entire international community, new progress will be made in the process for a political settlement of the Liberian crisis.

Mr. PERKINS (United States of America): I welcome the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) ministerial delegation to the Council.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to review United States policy in Liberia. I should like to start with a clear articulation of United States objectives in Liberia: a negotiated settlement under the leadership of ECOWAS; full disarmament of all Liberian warring factions; the return home of nearly 1 million displaced Liberians; free and fair internationally monitored elections; and the establishment of a unified government based on respect for human rights, democratic principles and economic accountability.

(Mr. Perkins, United States)

I am saddened that we meet here today against the backdrop of renewed conflict in Liberia. The cease-fire brokered by the Economic Community of West African States held successfully for 21 months. It began to break down in August of this year, then was shattered on 15 October when the National Patriotic Front (NPFL) launched attacks on the West African peace-keeping force (ECOMOG), which is protecting Monrovia. Fighting continues on the outskirts of Monrovia, as ECOMOG re-establishes its defensive perimeter around the city, while the NPFL continues to resist ECOWAS calls for encampment and disarmament of the Liberian warring factions.

Good faith and extensive efforts to resolve the conflict peacefully have foundered against NPFL's refusal to implement the agreements that Charles Taylor signed at Yamoussoukro and Geneva. Weapons remain plentiful throughout the country, and almost a million Liberians displaced in surrounding countries and in Monrovia do not feel they can safely return to their homes. The revolution against Samuel Doe, supported by most Liberians, has become bogged down in a bitter struggle for personal power while the interests of the nation suffer.

None of the Liberian warring factions is, of course, blameless for the resumption of hostilities. Elements of every warring faction demonstrated a willingness to resume hostilities in the build-up to the current crisis, and we have repeatedly criticized ULIMO for launching its incursion in south-western Liberia. But no factor contributed to the climate of distrust so much as the intransigence of the National Patriotic Front. As the undisputed leader of the NPFL, which controls some 90 per cent of Liberian territory, Charles Taylor bears primary responsibility for the implementation of the Yamoussoukro peace plan calling for encampment and disarmament. Only

(Mr. Perkins, United States)

he can determine whether to create the conditions for free and fair elections throughout the country; he has chosen instead to seize on a variety of excuses not to do so. The United States remains open to cooperation with the NPFL, and we recognize that Taylor has legitimate security concerns. But Charles Taylor must find a way to work with ECOWAS and discontinue his verbal and military attacks on the regional organization. Continued resistance to disarmament portends continued conflict.

The declared purpose of the peace-keeping forces is, first of all, to defend themselves and disrupt the NPFL's ability to attack Monrovia, and, secondly, to convince Charles Taylor that military victory is not possible; he must return to a negotiated settlement, disarm his troops, and give the Liberian people the chance to select their own leaders through free and fair elections. The problems which plague Liberia - proliferation of weapons, insecurity and banditry, ethnic tensions, huge numbers of refugees and displaced persons and a shattered economy - will not yield to military solutions. But we must send a clear message to aggressors in Liberia and elsewhere: aggression will not be rewarded. No party which comes to power in Liberia through force or fraud can expect normal relations with the United States.

Much of the progress of the past year in reaching a political settlement has been undone, but we must not lose sight of what ECOWAS has accomplished through intervention and negotiation. The dispatch of a six-nation West African peace-keeping force in August 1990 demonstrated unprecedented African determination to take the lead in regional conflict resolution. ECOMOG ended the killing, separated the warring factions, allowed relief assistance to flow to avert starvation and established a cease-fire and framework for peaceful negotiations.

(Mr. Perkins, United States)

In a country where anarchy reigned, ECOMOG provided order and a bastion of security in Monrovia, and hundreds of thousands of Liberians flocked to the relative safety of the city. ECOMOG troops won the support of the populace and acted with restraint and professionalism during the 21-month cease-fire. ECOMOG remains virtually the only force in Liberia unblemished by serious human-rights abuses, and is the one military force not motivated by personal aggrandizement. Clearly, the ECOMOG troops would like to return to their home countries, but ECOMOG remains critical to peace, free elections and regional stability.

Although the dispatch of peace-keeping forces to Liberia was a decision taken by the ECOWAS Governments on their own initiative, we have supported this effort from its inception. In addition to more than $200 million in humanitarian assistance to victims of the Liberian conflict, we have provided a total of $8.6 million in assistance to ECOWAS directly, and $18.75 million in bilateral military grants to ECOWAS member States to support ECOMOG. Their effort has been endorsed by the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations, but ECOWAS countries have borne the vast majority of the expense of fielding the peace-keeping force in Liberia.

In addition to providing material support for ECOWAS and humanitarian support for Liberians, the United States stands ready to help support demobilization of all Liberian factions and to help ensure that the proposed elections are genuinely free and fair. To ensure real progress, however, comprehensive disarmament is necessary. Our experience in Angola, Cambodia and elsewhere amply demonstrates that peace without disarmament is tenuous at best. This is especially true in Liberia, where proliferation of guns is accompanied by indiscipline, drugs and widespread human-rights abuses.

(Mr. Perkins, United States)

It is imperative that the regional peace-keeping effort in Liberia succeed. Abandonment of the regional peace process could lead to resumption of warfare and probable humanitarian catastrophe. A bloody takeover by force would deal a setback to democratic aspirations throughout Africa and would lead to the conclusion that might makes right. Dissidents throughout the region, many of whom maintain connections to Charles Taylor, would be encouraged to take their battle into the streets rather than working through the political process. If the united ECOWAS effort fails in Liberia, the regional organization is unlikely to venture into the difficult realm of peace-keeping and conflict resolution in the future, and pressure will build rapidly for direct United States or United Nations intervention. We owe ECOWAS our full support as it considers means for pressuring the Liberian warring factions to implement the peace plan calling for encampment, disarmament and free and fair elections.

Mr. LADSOUS (France) (interpretation from French): I wish to begin by welcoming the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of countries members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), whose presence in the Council today reflects the seriousness of the confrontations in Liberia and the efforts the countries of the region - which are all too aware of it - intend to make to reach a settlement through dialogue.

This tragic situation demands that the international community make every effort to restore peace in that hapless country, where nothing so far seems to indicate that a lasting political settlement is in sight. To the contrary, the fighting has intensified since the beginning of October, imperilling the entire population of Liberia. The civilian population has suffered particularly cruel and horrific losses.

(Mr. Ladsous, France)

In this connection, I pay a special tribute to the United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations which are continuing to work at the very height of the war to assist the people of Liberia.

In view of this tragedy, France has not failed to hail the efforts of the countries of the region to restore peace to Liberia. We have supported, in particular, the mediation attempts of the ECOWAS Committee of Five, which led to the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement. We followed with interest the Cotonou and Abuja meetings organized by ECOWAS in October and early November respectively. We share the hope expressed on those occasions that a lasting cease-fire will finally be respected, and we support recourse to the international community to bolster the efforts of the parties and the countries of the region.

The message brought to the Council by the African Ministers for Foreign Affairs present today is clear: it is urgent that the United Nations establish contact with the parties in Liberia. Therefore, France lends its particular support to the call for a lasting cease-fire and the dispatch of a special representative of the Secretary-General to the site of the war and to the region on a fact-finding mission. It appears essential that we have a detailed report by the Secretary-General, describing the situation on the ground and setting out the recommendations he deems most vital to set the conditions for a lasting cease-fire. But the seriousness of the Liberian crisis demands speedy action. We therefore hope that the Secretary-General's fact-finding mission can take place without delay.

Finally, France supports the idea of a general and complete embargo on all shipments of weapons and military equipment to the parties to the conflict in Liberia. With respect to the monitoring role the Security Council should

(Mr. Ladsous, France)

legitimately play in the context of action under Chapter VII of the Charter, we welcome the provision in the draft resolution before the Council, by which the Council, on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General, would consider certain modalities for the implementation of the draft resolution, in particular its paragraph 8.

Sir David HANNAY (United Kingdom): I should like to begin by welcoming the presence in this Chamber of so many Ministers from West African countries. It is very notable that they have come to the Security Council for this debate, and I think it is right that we should mark the occasion by thanking them extremely warmly for the efforts they have made to bring peace to a very troubled State in West Africa, and for the sacrifices, both financial and in human terms, they have undertaken. I really do think they deserve the thanks of the Council for that.

The United Kingdom remains deeply concerned at the continuing conflict and indiscriminate slaughter in Liberia and at the failure of all recent attempts to bring about a cease-fire. A particular cause for concern at present is the plight of the refugees in Monrovia, now thought to number over 100,000.

We have consistently welcomed and supported the initiatives of the countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to try to resolve, through regional efforts, the crisis in Liberia. We hope that they will be able to sustain these efforts, which are an example to all of us. It is worth recalling the appalling situation which existed in Monrovia in the summer of 1990 before the intervention of the ECOWAS peace-keeping force. We are very conscious of the lengths to which the ECOWAS States have gone over the past two years to obtain a just solution to the conflict. We fully

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

support the ECOWAS peace plan and the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement, which represent the basis for a just and peaceful solution to the conflict in Liberia.

The United Kingdom condemns the actions of those parties which have consistently failed to honour agreements reached or to implement the repeated calls for a cease-fire. It is those factions in Liberia - and there is one, of course, that is most prominent amongst them - which refuse to accept that they cannot obtain power through military means that alone bear the responsibility for the present crisis. The challenge is a grim one. We have been encouraged by the renewed determination and unity of the States members of ECOWAS in facing it reflected in the decisions of the Abuja summit. We welcome the position adopted by ECOWAS and outlined by the visiting delegation of Ministers.

My delegation supports the draft resolution before the Council. In particular, we welcome the proposal that a special representative of the Secretary-General be appointed to evaluate the situation and to report back to the Council. We call on all parties to the conflict to recognize the futility of continued violence and to cooperate fully with the ECOWAS peace-keeping force and with the special representative of the Secretary-General when he is appointed so as to ensure a peaceful solution to this tragic conflict.

Mr. AYALA LASSO (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): At the outset I wish to extend the greetings of the Government of Ecuador and my own to the distinguished Ministers of State of the Governments of West Africa who are here with us today, and to offer them the support of Ecuador in the difficult task in which they personally and their Governments are involved in order to restore peace to Liberia and that tormented part of the world.

The Security Council has for months been following with concern the situation in Liberia. Its concern was evidenced in the presidential statements adopted in January 1991 and May of this year, through which it endorsed the peaceful efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), requested respect for the cease-fire and supported the humanitarian work of the United Nations and the Yamoussoukro Accord of October 1992 as the best possible way of finding a peaceful solution to the conflict, and called upon the parties to restore peace to the country and ensure that the crisis did not affect neighbouring countries.

We members of the Council have noted with regret how the problems of that country, which was born as a dream of freedom, have been deteriorating, giving rise to suffering for the people and at the same time extending the consequences of the crisis to neighbouring countries, which has given the crisis an international character.

This requires new and growing participation by the Council in support of regional efforts, because the persistence of the problem threatens the peace and security of the subregion as a whole.

In meeting today, the Council has reacted in positive and timely fashion to the request made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Benin, on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia.

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

In addition the draft resolution we are preparing to adopt responds to the Council's will effectively to contribute to a peaceful and lasting settlement of the problem within the authority it enjoys under the Charter to act in cases of the kind we are considering. It is necessary to draw attention to the Council's support for the efforts of ECOWAS to restore peace and for and the Yamoussoukro IV Accord, respect for and implementation of which by all signatories is certainly the most appropriate basis for a peaceful negotiated solution to the conflict.

It is necessary for all the parties scrupulously to respect the cease-fire agreements and strictly to comply with the rules of humanitarian international law, which would eliminate the suffering of the people of Liberia and facilitate the peaceful negotiation of a solution to the problem.

The Council also requests the Secretary-General to dispatch urgently a Special Representative to Liberia, and his evaluation and report will certainly facilitate future action by the Council.

One of the most important decisions of the Council in support of the activities of ECOWAS is the imposition of a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Liberia. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia has said, the purpose of this embargo is to prompt the fighting parties to abandon their military agenda and adopt a political agenda in order to solve the problem.

Ecuador hopes that the compliance of all States with this resolution will help to eliminate violence, facilitate the successful development of the ECOWAS peace efforts, and help restore peace, prosperity and full democracy in Liberia through the holding of fair and free elections in accordance with the Yamoussoukro IV Accord.

Mr. HATANO (Japan): Japan is deeply concerned over the deteriorating situation in Liberia, where heavy fighting has resulted in the deaths of many innocent people and the displacement of countless others.

The situation requires that we call on the parties concerned to stop fighting immediately and to strictly observe the cease-fire. It is important that the parties reaffirm their commitment to the Yamoussoukro Accord, which offers the best framework for a peaceful solution of the conflict.

Japan commends the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for its untiring efforts to bring the conflict to a speedy end, and will continue to support those efforts.

Japan believes that the Secretary-General should dispatch urgently a Special Representative to Liberia to evaluate the situation and report to the Security Council with recommendations as soon as possible. The Special Representative is expected to coordinate his efforts closely with those of ECOWAS.

Finally, I wish to appeal to the international community to reaffirm its support for increased humanitarian assistance to the victims of the conclict in Liberia.

Mr. ARRIA (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): Venezuela is pleased to welcome the Foreign Ministers of the countries of West Africa who are today participating in this meeting of the Council. We wish to express to them our support and appreciation.

Liberia has for almost three years been the victim of a civil war, a war against itself, that has already cost thousands of lives. It is another society which, like Somalia, is the victim of irresponsible international arms trade, which generates so-called low-intensity conflicts, but these conflicts have a high mortality rate.

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

The Security Council is today responding to Liberia's request and that of the Community of West African States in order to help find a solution to the crisis in Liberia, which, as the members of the Community have indicated, is theatening international peace and security and acquiring truly tragic human dimensions.

Venezuela supported the request to bring this matter before the Security Council because we are convinced that the Council should be attentive and receptive to issues that are of concern to and affect regional organizations. It is the Council's responsibility to interact with them without detriment to its own undeniable and unavoidable obligations and authority.

Since the establishment of the Mediation Committee in 1989, the Governments of West Africa have made extraordinary political and diplomatic efforts, from negotiating a cease-fire in October 1991 to organizing a transitional Government and an electoral process. These are eloquent demonstrations of the responsible discharge of their responsibilities in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

The nine Ministers of the Community who have spoken today pursuant to the mandate from their Heads of State or Government have told the Council how complicated the political negotiating process is at all levels with all the parties in order to find a peaceful solution.

The Community of West African States represents an admirable and valuable example of solidarity with Liberia in its suffering and responsibility for its own region, where the Liberian crisis is threatening to spread.

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is an admirable and valourous example of solidarity with the suffering of Liberia and also of responsibility towards its own region, into which the Liberian crisis is threatening to spread. The warning today from the representative of Sierra Leone to the effect that his country is in mortal danger is sufficient proof of this threat.

The determination so amply demonstrated by the Heads of State or Government of ECOWAS obliges the Council to provide the assistance requested so that this monumental effort in favour of peace does not collapse and to avoid having international peace and security jeopardized by the imminent spread of this terrible conflict.

To ensure that Liberia has the option of permanent peace based on national reconciliation and on the democratization of its society is without a doubt a difficult task that will demand a continuity of efforts by the countries of West Africa and real cooperation from other countries outside the area that have the ability to influence the process.

Venezuela joins in the support for this draft resolution, which is a new commitment by our Organization in this troubled region of West Africa.

Mr. SREENIVASAN (India): We in the Council are honoured today by the presence of seven Ministers of States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). They have taken the initiative of coming to New York to draw our attention to the exceptionally serious, indeed tragic, situation prevailing in Liberia, and to request this Council to assist in the very considerable and commendable efforts that ECOWAS itself has been exerting to find a solution to this crisis.

(Mr. Sreenivasan, India)

We have listened with attention to their statements today. A great deal of thought and wisdom has been invested by the highest authorities of the countries of the region, and their efforts have resulted in a series of agreements, to which the Liberian parties themselves have subscribed, designed to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis in that country. Regrettably, despite these efforts, hostilities have continued.

Since it began three years ago, the fighting in Liberia has resulted in thousands of casualties and untold suffering for even greater numbers of people. While the country has been devastated, innocent civilians have been the victims of this fratricidal conflict. Large numbers of refugees have fled their homes into neighbouring countries. Several hundreds of my own country's nationals have had to be evacuated from Monrovia, and those that remained continue to be in danger. There is clearly an international dimension to the situation that presents a direct threat to regional peace and security. The efforts of ECOWAS, in this regional context, have also received the endorsement of the Organization of African Unity.

Indeed, the Security Council has been seized of the situation in Liberia since early last year. In January 1991 the Security Council backed ECOWAS efforts and called on the parties to the conflict to respect the agreements they themselves had signed and to cooperate with ECOWAS to restore peace and security in Liberia. There were some signs of improvement in the situation initially, with the formation of the Interim Government of National Unity, but by May 1992 the conflict showed signs of deterioration again. The Council pronounced itself once more through a presidential statement declaring that the Yamoussoukro Accords, worked out under ECOWAS auspices, offered the best possible framework for a peaceful resolution of the Liberian conflict by

(Mr. Sreenivasan, India)

creating the necessary conditions for free and fair elections in Liberia. Once again, the Council called on the parties to respect and implement the various Accords of the peace process and refrain from actions which endanger the security of neighbouring States.

As the statements we have heard today from the countries of the region make evident, such action has been to little avail and the situation has deteriorated further. The Yamoussoukro Accords still remain only partly implemented, and ECOWAS efforts to obtain their implementation have resulted only in further hostilities. ECOWAS therefore has rightly appealed for the Council's support in the furtherance of its efforts. The Liberian Foreign Minister himself has requested action by the Security Council. We believe that it is incumbent on the Council to respond.

The draft resolution we are considering calls for the establishment of a mandatory arms embargo on Liberia. Given the situation currently prevailing in the country, such an embargo should help in reducing hostilities and bloodshed, besides sending a clear political signal to the parties that the international community is serious in demanding peace. Equally importantly, the Secretary-General is being requested to send a special representative to Liberia urgently, to meet with all parties concerned and to evaluate the situation so that the Council can have before it an independent analysis of the situation on the basis of which it can act.

It is our hope that all parties in Liberia will extend their full cooperation to the special representative to enable him to report on the situation faithfully. My delegation will await the Secretary-General's recommendations with interest.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco) (interpretation from French): I should like first of all to welcome the ministerial delegation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Amongst the many problems our continent is facing, the serious crisis in Liberia is without a doubt one of the most disturbing. The tragic situation that has prevailed in that fraternal country for long months now - too long - is of course of the greatest concern.

The tireless efforts of the ECOWAS countries, which Morocco supports, had been reflected in the establishment of a peace plan that was intended to lead to a peaceful settlement of the conflict through the holding of free and fair elections.

As the situation has unfortunately got worse and is a threat to regional and international peace and security, the ECOWAS States have naturally sought the support of the United Nations and the Security Council. In view of the gravity of the situation, our Council has not failed to respond to this appeal promply and effectively.

The draft resolution that has been worked out by the Council responds without a doubt - with caution, of course, but in a very serious and perspicacious manner - to the serious situation obtaining in Liberia. Indeed, the draft reiterates the interest the international community as a whole is showing in a Member State. The international community is giving encouragement, unequivocally and in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, to a subregional organization, ECOWAS, which has done its best to come to the aid of a State in the subregion and has tried to settle by peaceful means the complex problems associated with the civil war that is tearing this fraternal country apart.

(Mr. Benjelloun-Touimi, Morocco)

The draft resolution that will be adopted this evening is fully satisfactory to us for more than one reason. First of all, it meets the concerns of a subregional organization of our African continent. It is also the fruit of intensive labour in which all the members of the Council participated, and, as an African, I thank the Council sincerely.

My delegation pays a special tribute to Ambassador Jesus of Cape Verde for the way he has made himself available to us, for his wisdom, and, if I may say so, for his acute sense of persuasion.

My delegation will therefore vote in favour of this text, which, while providing full support for the efforts of ECOWAS to re-establish peace, security and stability in Liberia, imposes a general and complete embargo on all weapons, in an attempt to stabilize the military situation in the country; calls upon all parties to the conflict to respect the cease-fire; and requests the Secretary-General to dispatch a mission to study, on the spot, ways of enabling us to strengthen the measures taken by ECOWAS.

The diligent way in which ECOWAS has approached the Council and the promptness of the Council's response are encouraging factors that give us grounds to hope that the situation will improve and that Liberia - torn apart, battered and destabilized - will soon take its place amongst us once again in peace and tranquillity.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The next speaker is the representative of Mauritius, who wishes to make a statement as Chairman of the African Group for the month of November.

I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. PEERTHUM (Mauritius): It is a great honour for the delegation of Mauritius and for me personally, as Chairman of the African Group for the month of November, to address the Security Council on an issue of crucial importance for peace and security on our continent.

Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council, and to wish you success in the conduct of our deliberations.

In convening a special meeting at ministerial level on the peaceful settlement of the conflict in Liberia, the Security Council has demonstrated once again its commitment to furthering the cause of peace. Regional hotbeds of tension and crises remain the most serious obstacles today to the positive trends that have emerged in the world in recent years, changing international relations. The conflict in Liberia is therefore a cause of great concern to the international community at large, but foremost to Africa.

The efforts of African States in mounting a peace-keeping operation, the first of its kind at the subregional level, at enormous cost and sacrifice, especially for the member States of the Standing Mediation Committee and the Committee of Five of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), deserve the highest praise.

The Organization of African Unity has for its part given full attention to this question and provided political support for the elaboration of a peace process in the spirit of the Abuja Declaration on political principles. The Security Council also reaffirmed in May this year that the Yamoussoukro Accord of 30 October 1991 offers the best possible framework for a peaceful resolution of the Liberian conflict by creating the necessary conditions for free and fair elections in Liberia.

(Mr. Peerthum, Mauritius)

The programme of operation elaborated by the Committee of Five in Geneva in May for the implementation of the Accord and the deployment of the Economic Community Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) reflect the positive sentiments expressed by the Heads of State of ECOWAS towards the current process of democratization among States of the region and popular participation in political pluralism. It is an ambitious task, whose implementation would have helped set up appropriate institutional mechanisms for a peaceful political transition in Liberia.

It is thus a matter of deep concern that the situation in Liberia is deteriorating to the point of precluding prospects for the restoration of a cease-fire and the disarming and confining of belligerent troops, let alone any immediate hope for democratic elections.

The force of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia of Charles Taylor has resorted to hostile acts against the peace-keeping troops of ECOMOG. Atrocities committed against innocent civilian populations have resulted in nearly 3,000 deaths in the past month and caused an influx of refugees into Monrovia, where conditions are critical, to say the least.

The efforts of the States members of ECOWAS are a courageous attempt to resolve a serious African conflict by the peaceful settlement of disputes, and not through a military solution. They deserve the full support of the international community.

The measures outlined in the draft resolution (S/24827) come under Chapter VII of the Charter. They provide for sanctions and an arms embargo against those parties to the conflict that do not respect the provisions of the Yamoussoukro Accord, and are fully justified, in my delegation's view.

(Mr. Peerthum, Mauritius)

The assistance of the United Nations at this juncture is essential to avoid a tragedy that could have wide-ranging repercussions.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The last speaker on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ELARABY (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): The Security Council meets today to examine the deteriorating situation arising from the continuing conflict in Liberia and its spread to its borders with neighbouring States. This is a situation that poses a threat to peace and security in the region of West Africa and, therefore makes it incumbent upon the Security Council to act in order to put an end to the conflict through a peaceful solution to the crisis.

In this regard, the delegation of Egypt welcomes the participation of the African ministerial delegation in the Council's debate. This participation reflects clearly the great importance attached by the African States to dealing with the situation in Liberia.

The West African States have tried to help Liberia overcome its plight. We commend those efforts. Moreover, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) drew up a peace plan, and that was followed by the Yamoussoukro Accord in October 1991. Those States have continued their good offices to promote negotiation between the parties to the dispute and urged them to respect the cease-fire and to start preparing for general elections.

In addition, the West African States sought to create a peaceful climate that could reflect the genuine will of the people of Liberia, pave the road towards remedying the problems created by the war and the devastation it has

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

caused, make it possible for the refugees to return to their homes and thereby restore normal living conditions there.

However, it is evident that, to this moment, some parties to the dispute are not prepared to carry out the previous accords. Indeed, those parties have launched military operations against the cease-fire monitoring group (ECOMOG) of ECOWAS. Given this deteriorating situation which threatens peace and security in a region that embraces a number of States Members of the United Nations, the Security Council is duty-bound to discharge its responsibilities under the Charter by taking appropriate action to ensure that all parties to the conflict respect the cease-fire promptly, start implementing the peace accord and engage in reconstruction. The most important measure in this respect is to apply the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter and thereby to impose an embargo on the supply of arms to Liberia.

In this context, the position of Egypt may be summed up as follows: First, the role played by ECOWAS with the aim of restoring peace, security and stability in Liberia should be supported.

Secondly, all parties should be urged to cooperate with the monitoring group dispatched by ECOWAS and to refrain from any action that might impede the discharge of its tasks.

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

Thirdly, all parties should be called upon to comply promptly and fully with the cease-fire.

Fourthly, the Secretary-General should dispatch a Special Representative to Liberia to meet with all parties concerned and assess the situation in an effort to facilitate the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

In our view, the United Nations has a crucial role to play in the peace process in Liberia once the parties concerned have complied with the cease-fire. That role by the United Nations should be to prepare for and monitor the future elections. United Nations specialized agencies could play a crucial role in rebuilding the infrastructures of Liberia.

My delegation supports the adoption by the Security Council of a resolution that contains the aforesaid elements. We believe that this will send an unmistakable signal to all the parties concerned that the Council will not hesitate to take the necessary and appropriate measures to deal with the situation in the light of future developments.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it in document S/24827. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that that is the case.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I therefore put to the vote the draft resolution in document S/24827.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: Austria, Belgium, Cape Verde, China, Ecuador, France, Hungary, India, Japan, Morocco, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela, Zimbabwe

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): There are 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has therefore been adopted unanimously as resolution 788 (1992).

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Benin wishes to make a statement, and I now call on him.

Mr. HOLO (Benin) (interpretation from French): I should like, on behalf of the Ministerial Delegation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) present here today, to express to you, Mr. President, our sincere thanks for the dedication, competence and skill with which you have conducted the business of the Security Council on this important question of civil war in Liberia, the continuation of which is a threat to the peace and security of the West African subregion.

The Council has had a thorough discussion of the subject, which has resulted in forceful action, as the tragic situation requires. The Council's decision sends a very clear message to the protagonists in the ongoing tragedy in Liberia. Indeed, the international community cannot allow those protagonists to dispose as they please of the lives and riches of a people who have a right to choose their leaders through peaceful and democratic means, merely to slake their own thirst for tyranny. It is also an encouragement of the tireless efforts to find peace that are being made by our Heads of State and Government, determined as they are to restore security to the subregion, which is eager to achieve economic integration in the interest of its peoples.

The whole of Africa is grateful to the Council for having taken proper stock of a situation that can only further impede the recovery of its economy, whose continuing worsening can undermine its own security as well as that of the rest of the world.

(Mr. Holo, Benin)

On behalf of our Heads of State and Government, we assure the Security Council that the Economic Community of West African States will cooperate with the Secretary-General's Special Representative in implementing the Peace Plan for Liberia so that the Liberian people, so battered and war-torn, may finally experience peace, security and unity, and embark, with our support, on their reconstruction and once more undertake their development in a world of solidarity and independence.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 7.25 p.m.